

NRC AGM November 26th 2018

Recreational & Explore Rowing

The seventh season of the Northern Explore Series reached its conclusion in October with the last of the seven rounds at Tyne ARC. Only one round (at Tyne United in March) was lost to the weather. It has been another successful year, much enjoyed by those who take part. Minor revisions to the format and rules appear to have worked well, although entry numbers have shown a decline, with 116 people taking part this year as opposed to 151 in 2017. The average entry of 9.5 teams per round is also down, and the total number of teams has fallen from 37 in 2017 to 27 this year. Of this year's participants 76 were female and 40 male.

Barcing Mad won the Open league giving Berwick ARC its first success in the competition. After a thrilling final round the Women's league was shared between TURC Ducks from Tyne United RC and Tyne of your Life from Tyne ARC.

Explore leagues have become popular in several other regions as a means of engaging novice, recreational and returning rowers and retired competitors, and as a way of improving skills for those less committed to racing.

Planning for next year's Explore Series is in progress. Tees RC is no longer able to offer a round and a new venue is under consideration for August 2019. It would be helpful if clubs could encourage participation.

A draft timetable can be found on <http://www.nerowing.com/sundays.html>

The academic sector continues to arrange fun and competitive events for less committed members of the rowing community.

There was good news on the touring front in March when British Rowing announced a 3-year sponsorship partnership with Charles Stanley Wealth Management to support the growth and development of recreational rowing in England. Through this they have provided two packages of equipment totalling 8 coxed touring quads, plus blades and trailers. Packages were delivered in July, one is currently housed in the Thames Valley and the other in the Eastern Region.

Tours have taken place around the UK and abroad, some attended by members from the Northern Region who have returned with very favourable reports of their experiences.

For the second year the Great Coal Row weekend took place at Southampton in May, and in June around 50 rowers, including one from Durham ARC, took part in a 2-day Explore the Broads tour of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads, arranged by clubs from the Eastern Region.

Closer to home the Port Authority was unwilling to grant permission to stage the River Wear Tour of Sunderland on the same day as the Tall Ships Race but the tour went ahead later in July with participant numbers reduced from those of the previous year, crews from Gateshead and Lakeland joining City of Sunderland RC for the 20km row in stable boats and skiffs.

The annual row from Tees to Yarm took place on a Tuesday morning in August with an increased number of participants. The Tees 'Wrecks' invited members from Durham ARC and Hexham RC to join them and other members of the host club for the 25km return trip in a mixture of fine and stable boats of all classes, including two replacement Wintech touring quads acquired by Tees RC earlier this year. The row was followed by a BBQ lunch at the River Tees Watersports Centre attended by over 100.

Members of Gateshead CRC organised a skiff row on the Tyne in July, and in August members from Durham ARC took part in the Rallye du Canal du Midi, a 5-day tour over 200km in southern France.

Two members from Durham ARC and two from Tyne United RC were included among the 114 participants for the 25th annual British Rowing Tour, covering 75km of the Upper Thames over 3 days in August and September, several crews taking part in the Charles Stanley sponsored quads.

A half marathon for recreational quads and fours was arranged to coincide with the Boston Marathon, for which the Charles Stanley boats were again available, seats being bookable by individuals.

Following successful events for the previous 7 years there was no Great Tyne Row this year, mainly because of lack of suitable tides. A date of September 8th has been set for the 2019 Great Tyne Row. The Recreational Rowing Committee wishes to make the sponsored quads and trailers available for this.

Plans for tours in 2019 include the annual British Rowing Tour which will be to the Lake District in August/September, for which the sponsored quads will be available, and the 3rd BR European Tour to Lithuania in June. Assistance with organising the national tour would be appreciated.

The Great Coal Row and Broads Tour are expected to be repeated and the Recreational Rowing Committee would like to see more regional tours.

Planning permission has been approved for redevelopment of the boathouse at Ebchester, a venue last used for rowing in the 1970s but which is ideal for recreational purposes. As the project progresses there has been regular use of the River Derwent by members of several clubs from the region.

Because of the shortage among clubs of 2-bay trailers suitable for transporting stable boats Durham University BC has agreed that its trailer can be borrowed by the NRC for recreational events when not otherwise in use.

Colin Lawson

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